



# **Origins and Status of the Water Quality Protection Land Acquisition Program**

**March 2012**



## **Agenda**

- Introduction
- Benefits of Open Space
- History
- Land Management



## **Open Space Benefits**

- Enhanced water quality and quantity
- Protection of future water supply
- Endangered species protection
- Carbon sequestration



## **Community Benefits**

- Protection of Barton Springs
- Preservation of natural heritage
- Scenic views and vistas
- Public access opportunities, including Violet Crown Trail
- Potential for increased adjacent property values



## **History: Drivers**

- Barton Creek PUD (1990)
- Passage of SOS Ordinance (1992)
- Property Rights Movement
- State Legislative Action
- Barton Creek Report (1997)
- Voter-approved bond initiative (1998)
  - Focus on Barton Springs Zone



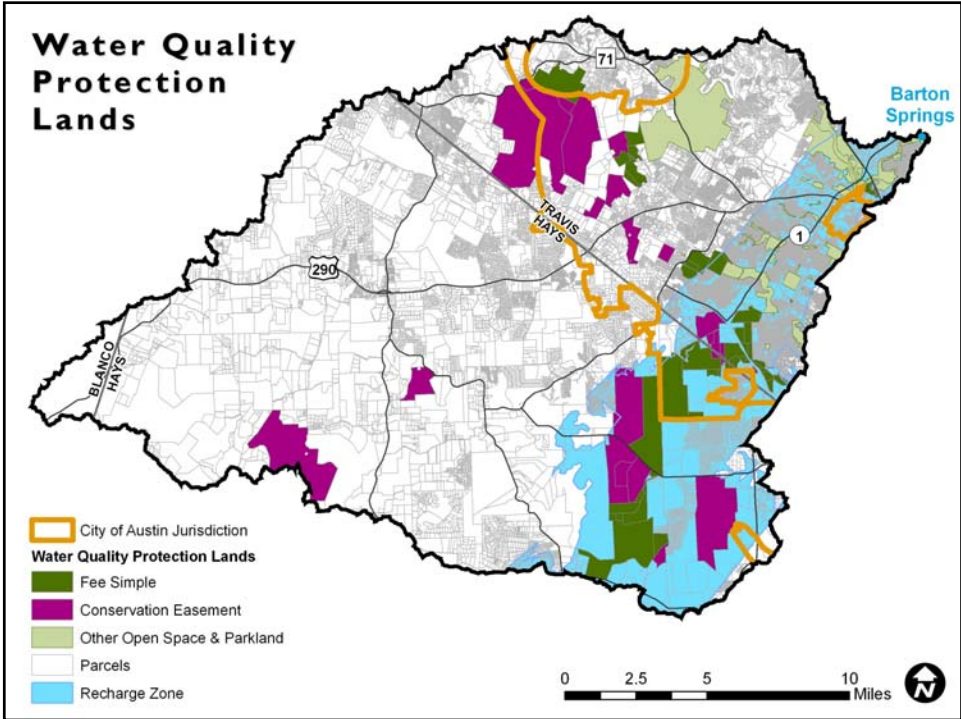
## **History: Partnerships**

- Reliance on strategic partnerships
  - e.g., Nature Conservancy, Hill Country Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, Hays County, NRCS
- Comparison to regional efforts
  - e.g., Hays County, San Antonio Aquifer Protection Program



# History: Acquisition

May 1998	\$65M	15,047 ac.
Nov. 2000	\$13.4M	5,000 ac.
Nov. 2006	<u>\$50M</u>	<u>6,530 ac.</u>
	\$128.4M	26,577 ac.
Partnership Contributions	\$14.9M	
Conservation Easements (16,782 ac.)		63%
Fee (9,795 acres)		37%





## Land Management

### **Fee Title holdings (9,795 ac)**

- Council approved goal & objective oriented management plans
- Vegetation management for ecosystem goals
- Fire management - ecosystem and public safety
- Trail access and event oriented public access

### **Conservation Easements (16,782 ac)**

- No direct operation or management
- Land still privately owned
- Goal and objective based agreements
- Administered by City staff

### **Cost per acre for WQPL management**

- 2010-2011 \$40.22/acre



## Imagine Austin: Draft Priority Actions

- Expand the acquisition of environmentally significant land, conservation easements, and development rights to protect sensitive areas
- Protect recharge zones, floodplains, creeks and their headwaters, and other environmentally sensitive areas





## Acquisition Criteria

- Creek and Aquifer Protection
- Avoided Pollution
- Contiguity
- Management Considerations
- Public Use Value (2006)
- Financial Feasibility





